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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002491

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: FM ZEBARI ON NEIGHBORS CONFERENCE, TAWAFUQ, UNAMI

Classified By: Political Counselor Matt Tueller for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S) Summary: FM Zebari will travel to Cairo on July 27 to sound out his Arab counterparts on convening a second Neighbors' Conference sometime in September. Zebari suggested to Pol/C that Kuwait might be a good choice to host a Conference Secretariat. Zebari promised to check with participants in the Security Working Group (set to meet in Damascus August 8-9) on allowing the USG to observe the session. Turning to the Refugees Working Group taking place July 26 in Amman, Zebari said that the Iraqi delegation would indicate Iraq's willingness to sit down with UNHCR, Jordan and Syria in order to work out a mutually agreeable mechanism for distributing \$25 million dollars that the Government of Iraq has pledged to support Iraqi refugees in those countries. Zebari agreed to convey USG thinking on the modalities for U.S.-Iraqi-Iranian security talks to the Iranians. Zebari suggested Tawafuq's threat to quit the government was further evidence that Iraq's Sunnis fail to play a positive political role. Zebari said the MFA would transmit a letter to the UN requesting a renewal of UNAMI's mandate as soon as he receives feedback from the Prime Minister's Office and from the USG on the MFA's proposals, but he reacted negatively to the suggestion that UNAMI's mandate be broadened so as to allow for a possible UNAMI role in resolving internal border disputes (e.g., Kirkuk). Zebari asked for assistance with IZ badging issues. See paragraph 4 for action request. End summary.

Neighbors' Conference  
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¶2. (S) Pol/C used a July 26 courtesy call on FM Hoshayr Zebari to press for a second Neighbors' Conference as soon as possible. Zebari said it would be difficult to convene such a follow-up conference before all three working groups were functioning. He said the Russians were particularly insistent on that point. Nevertheless, after rejecting the first week of September (due to a NAM meeting in Tehran and an Arab League Ministerial) and pushing back against a meeting in late August ("everyone will be on vacation"), Zebari did not rule out the possibility of a mid-September meeting. Zebari added that he would travel to Cairo on July 27 and would use the opportunity to sound out his fellow Arab FMs on the prospects for a second conference. He predicted that if Iraq's neighbors agreed to a conference in that time frame, their preference would be to hold the meeting in New York immediately prior to the UNGA.

¶3. (S) With respect to establishing a Conference Secretariat, Zebari admitted that the MFA had not yet given much thought as to where the Secretariat should be based, or who would pay for its operations. Zebari suggested that Kuwait, which he described as a neutral player, might make an appropriate host for the Secretariat, and he did not reject Pol/C's counter-suggestion of Turkey. Zebari said the modalities of the Secretariat would ultimately have to be established by the participants at the second conference.

## Security Working Group

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14. (C) Zebari promised to check with participants in the conference's Border Security Working Group to explore whether the USG would be accorded observer status at the upcoming Working Group meeting (August 8-9 in Damascus). He cautioned that Syria and Iran would likely object to expanding the conference structure to encompass permanent observers in the various working groups. Action request: Post recommends that the Department ask Embassy Damascus to demarche the SARG in order to formally request observer status for the USG at the Border Security Working Group.

## Refugees Working Group

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15. (SBU) After Emboffs alerted Zebari that the meeting of the Refugees Working Group in Amman appeared to be stuck on the issue of a mechanism to distribute Iraqi aid, Zebari got DFM Hammoud (leader of the Iraqi delegation) on the phone. Hammoud informed Zebari that Jordan was asking for no less than \$1 billion dollars from Iraq to care for Iraqi refugees, while Syria said it needed even more. Despite lingering resistance in the government to disbursing Iraqi funds through UNHCR, Zebari authorized Hammoud to announce that Iraq would sit down with each host country and UNHCR to discuss mutually agreeable mechanisms for distributing its pledge of \$25 million dollars to assist Iraqi refugees.

Iran Talks

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16. (S) At Pol/C's request, Zebari agreed to convey U.S.

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thinking on the modalities for the upcoming first session of the trilateral security sub-committee to the Iranians, emphasizing that Ambassador Crocker would not/not lead the U.S. side of the sub-committee talks and that the discussions would be limited to the agreed upon agenda of Al-Qaeda, borders, and militias. Zebari noted that Iranian Ambassador Qomi (who is expected to return to Iraq early next week, presumably after receiving instructions in Tehran) was pressing to launch the working group process with a second meeting between himself and Ambassador Crocker; Pol/C stressed that this was not what the parties agreed to at their last meeting and the FM said he understood.

## Tawafuq

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17. (C) Turning to Tawafuq's threats to quit PM Maliki's government, Zebari said that some of Tawafuq's demands were reasonable, whereas others were unreasonable. He expressed hope that the crisis with Tawafuq would play out as similar crises had in the past, with Tawafuq backing down at the last moment. The problem with Tawafuq, said Zebari, is that the Sunnis became "spoiled" early on in the government formation process because it became clear that there was an imperative to include the Sunnis at any cost. Moreover, Zebari opined that the Sunnis had never reconciled themselves to playing a subordinate role in the political process. In addition, he noted that the growing personal animosity between PM Maliki and VP Tariq Hashimi was adding an unfortunate dynamic to the latest confrontation.

## UNAMI

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18. (C) Noting that he had recently shared with the Embassy and with USUN a letter containing his thoughts on how to expand UNAMI's mandate, Zebari indicated that he would send a formal request to the UNSC that UNAMI's mandate be extended as soon as he has incorporated feedback from the Prime Minister's office and the USG. Zebari reacted positively to

the U.S. suggestion that he include language that would enable UNAMI to possibly play a role on transitional justice (i.e., de-Baathification), but was wary of introducing any changes to the text that would leave the door open to UNAMI facilitating solutions to border disputes (i.e., Kirkuk). He noted that such proposals had been strenuously resisted by the Kurds in the past. Pol/C and Zebari discussed language that would leave open the possibility of a UNAMI role in solving Kirkuk by referring to general support when requested for implementation of constitutional provisions.

Maliki to Ankara  
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¶9. (C) On the margins of the Zebari meeting, DFM Abbawi confirmed that PM Maliki plans to visit Ankara on August 6.

Badging  
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¶10. (SBU) FM Zebari asked for the Embassy's assistance in resolving badging issues that he said were hampering the operations of the MFA. Zebari noted that some members of his entourage could not get badges to enter the IZ, and that he himself often found himself stuck at checkpoints for hours during his multiple forays into the IZ per day.

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